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***NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY  
JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE***

JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



**What Polar Bears Can Teach Us about Mission Creep**

by

**Thomas B. Ham**

**Colonel, United States Army**

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# **What Polar Bears Can Teach Us about Mission Creep**

**By**

**Thomas B. Ham**

**Colonel, United States Army**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense. This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.**

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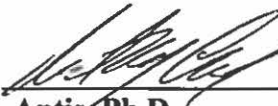
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## **Abstract**

Since the announcement of the Afghan drawdown in 2011, the Joint Staff has experienced a significant increase in the demand for ground forces from the Combatant Commands. These requests intended to use the forces for theater campaign plans focused on steady state or Phase 0 operations. Mission Creep, the expansion of a project or mission beyond its original goals, is often an outcome of such steady state operations. Because the military is increasing steady state operations, mission creep is inevitable, particularly in a resource constrained environment. Adapting to mission creep, at the joint planning level, is increasingly necessary because of the complexity of steady state operations. The goal of this paper is to underscore the importance of adaptation at the joint planning level due to the challenges of increasing military complexity. The paper first outlines how stability tasks in military operations contributes the growth of Mission Creep and develops some essential concepts. The paper then uses the Siberian intervention of 1918-1920 as a historical case study to employ the concepts and provide timely lessons to joint planners. The paper concludes by proposing three recommendations that flow from the case study. Specifically, Combatant Commands must have more dialogue with civilian policymakers, exercise more discipline in assessing partnership programs, and advocate for more allocated forces. If implemented, these efforts will improve the civil-military relationship and better balance innovative planning and prevention of reckless action.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

There are two things which will always be difficult for a democratic nation to do: beginning and ending a war.<sup>1</sup>  
Alexis de Tocqueville

*Mission Creep* is the expansion of an operation or mission beyond its original goals, often after initial success. It occurs when the political purpose, usually due to changes in the military-strategic situation, supersedes the initial military purpose of an operation. When these conditions do change, new actors often emerge, old actors shift alliances based on a new assessment, and U.S. military leaders often have to pick up the pieces with conflicting or exceedingly vague instructions.

Perhaps one of the first instances of mission creep occurred in Siberia between 1918 and 1920. An 8,000-man American Expeditionary Force (AEF) under General William S. Graves was sent to Russia to support the defeat of the Central Powers and protect millions of dollars of U.S. military equipment located in Vladivostok and the along the Trans-Siberian railway. Graves's mission, as part of a coalition that included Great Britain, France, and Japan, was complicated by the uncertain military-strategic situation and the larger political stakes sought by President Woodrow Wilson. Once the World War I ended in November 1918, the U.S. forces in Siberia became a security force and a political instrument for U.S. interests in the Far East.

The new political landscape that emerged from the Russian Civil War, the Japanese control of Manchuria, the role of Czech Legion, and the depredation of Cossack leaders, namely Grigori Semenov, brought about a multi-faceted and largely unworkable

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1840) 31.

expanded mission of security and deterrence.<sup>2</sup> Given unclear mission directives, ill-defined operations areas, and the harsh physical conditions of Siberia, success or failure hinged upon the military's ability to adapt to its changing surroundings. Although national policy failed to adapt to the dynamic strategic situation in Russia, the military planning system was relatively successful in adapting to mission creep by refusing to expand tasks and enforcing a strict interpretation of the Aide Memoire provided by President Wilson.

Currently, the term mission creep often has a negative connotation, given the history of American military interventions in the Balkans, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, military leaders are very sensitive to the term, as it arouses images of confusion and futility. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Army Martin Dempsey reacted strongly to a reporter's question in 2014 implying that U.S. forces were experiencing mission creep concerning the direction of Operation Inherit Resolve (OIR) in Iraq. "You hear the term 'mission creep' beginning to make its way around the airwaves. What we do is mission match....What the American people should understand is that our role is to match the resources to the mission we're given. *Right now*, the mission is limited, but I think appropriately so."<sup>3</sup> The Chairman's statement suggests that missions, given the increasing level of stability tasks involved, will evolve and potentially expand to meet changing requirements. Dempsey, by shying away from any association with the idea of

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<sup>2</sup> Carl J. Richard, *When the United States invaded Russia*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 169. President Woodrow Wilson ordered U.S. Intervention in Siberia at the time that the Armistice and the Western Front were still in doubt. As the war ended, Wilson saw the Bolsheviks and the Japanese as threats to his new political landscape. Grigori Semenov was a White Military Leader supported by the Japanese in Siberia. As a leader, he failed to prevent his men for stealing, raping and developing a reputation as common criminals.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Vanden Brook, "Dempsey: Defeating Islamic State requires strikes in Syria," *USA Today*, August 22, 2014.

mission creep, nevertheless acknowledged that “mission match” is a euphemism for mission creep and appears to be a given in complex operating environments.

This study will review and evaluate the concept of mission creep in military operations, using the 1918-1920 intervention in Siberia as a case study. The experiences of General Graves and his forces, dubbed the “Polar Bear Expedition”, points to some important lessons for joint planners. These lessons address the challenge of expanding mission requirements in operations defined by ambiguous or shifting military – strategic circumstances. Instead of treating “mission creep” as a “dirty word,” senior military leaders and planners should accept that it is merely a reflection of today’s turbulent times and adopt these recommendations to better prepare for the changes in mission requirements that will inevitably occur as the U.S. maneuvers through the dynamic strategic landscape.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Mission Creep Explained

Mission Creep has several meanings....In Bosnia, all apply. It is a word guaranteed to strike terror into the hearts of U.S. policy-makers.<sup>1</sup>

Harry Summers, *Washington Times*

As the U.S. military enters a time of fiscal re-prioritization and the announced shift of defense guidance to focus on the Pacific region, the basic challenge for joint commanders and their planners is how to find a balance in the current strategic environment that implies broader missions for the U.S. armed forces, while determining the right mix of means to accomplish them. Many believe a disparity is already prevalent as resources are not matching up to stated priorities.<sup>2</sup> The term “Mission Creep”, a term popularized during 1990s as an operational scarecrow for policy makers to evade long term entanglements in the domestic issues of other nations, has resurfaced in the national dialogue.<sup>3</sup> However, there is a new twist. The military, primarily Combatant Commands (COCOMs), is now responsible for adding new missions, not the politicians.

### Stability Operations Challenges

Today, the ratio of stability tasks accomplished by the U.S. military greatly outnumber operations classified as conventional.<sup>4</sup> Activities like peace operations, foreign internal defense, security assistance, humanitarian and civic assistance, support to counterinsurgencies, support counterdrug operations, counter-terrorism and others fall

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Summers, “Mission Creeps,” *Washington Times*, 11 April 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence J. Kolb, Sean Duggan, and Laura Conley, “Quadrennial Defense Review Fails to Match Resources to Priorities” Center of American Progress, 4 February 2010, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ben Zimmer, “Mission Creep Crawls Out of the 90’s,” *Wall Street Journal*, 27 June 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.07—Stability*, Washington, DC, 2 June 2014, 1.6.

under this umbrella. Each activity brings a level of complexity to the military and has exposed the inability of other U.S. government agencies to mobilize sufficient personnel and resources. Therefore, the potential for mission creep is organic to these types of tasks as the military attempts to fill a void, achieve a modicum of stability, and depart.

Here is where the paradigm has shifted regarding mission creep. In the past, U.S. forces trained against a narrow set of mission requirements and desired capabilities. With a wider set of tasks associated with stability operations, senior military leaders asserted that stability operations were a drain on dwindling resources, overstretching an ill-trained force and requiring other elements of national power to share the load.<sup>5</sup> Arguments over the loss of military readiness versus the capability to participate in humanitarian or peacekeeping operations dominated the civil / military relationship. In fact, the debate reduced the number of military commitments associated with stability tasks in the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the unpredictable and multidimensional nature of stability operations, they are now attractive to the military as a vehicle to retain force structure and justify funding in a resource constrained environment. The recommendations of expansion of stability tasks are now coming directly from military, not civilian, leaders. This new

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<sup>5</sup> Dominic J. Caraccilo. *Beyond Guns and Steel—A War Termination Strategy* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger International, 2011), 66.

<sup>6</sup> Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 182. According to Secretary of State Albright's memoirs, she once argued with CJCS General Colin Powell for the use of military force by asking, "What's the point of you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?" Despite the debate with General Powell, she further explains that several policymakers heavily factored the military readiness debate as a way to avoid interventions from the mid-1990's to the early 2000s. Coupled with the reluctance to place American troops under United Nations command, the overall number of peacekeeping or stability operations went down. Sec. Albright's question sums up the tension during the Bosnia operations between two schools of thought for military interventions. First, the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine which requires a clear national interest, overwhelming force, and firm congressional support. While the Albright School believes that United States can couple military force with diplomacy to achieve long-term, unquantifiable goals such as the furtherance of democracy and human rights.

avenue of approach for mission creep may not create a failure that leads to casualties; but it can lead to breaking the “bank” in terms of the defense budget due to new, enduring commitments and their frequency.

For example, US Army Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno started the Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) initiative as a response to a changing strategic environment as well as a way to ensure that the Army could justify its force structure by effectively meeting the growing requirements of the COCOMs.<sup>7</sup> The Army’s goal is to provide the combatant commanders with a force that will bring additional capability, capacity, and continuity to their theater security cooperation programs. The belief is that regional engagement will set favorable conditions for commitment of forces if diplomacy and deterrence fails.<sup>8</sup>

The by-product of the RAF concept is the consumption of Army land force readiness, mostly at the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) level, as it adds a new level of commitment in training and equipping. Serious commitment to cultural, regional, and linguistic training is costly; General Daniel Allyn, head of Army Forces Command, said in late 2013 that dwindling resources already prevented most newly assigned RAF units from going through their full planned conventional training cycle.<sup>9</sup>

Tensions over mission creep are no longer over the distinction of civilian and military missions, but rather the internal military debate at the COCOM level regarding

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<sup>7</sup> Kimberly Field, James Leatmont, and Jason Charland, “Regionally Aligned Forces: Business Not as Usual,” *Parameters* 43 (Autumn 2013), 59.

<sup>8</sup> Department of the Army, *TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, Win in a Complex World*, 31 October 2014, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Rosa Brooks, “Portrait of the U.S. Army as a work in progress.” *Foreign Policy.com*, May 8, 2014. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/08/portrait-of-the-army-as-a-work-in-progress> (accessed February 14, 2015).

fiscal or a bottom up approach towards strategic thinking and force planning. Both options have strengths and weaknesses. A fiscal approach links military efforts to the economy. It requires priority setting and gives the impression of encouraging discipline in the joint planning process. However, it can lead to underfunding and the emphasis of fair sharing.<sup>10</sup> A bottom-up approach emphasizes existing capabilities and real world realities. It seeks efficiencies and improvements in decision making and other processes. A negative aspect is that it allows COCOM planning to focus on the short term and from a strictly regional outlook, not a global view.<sup>11</sup>

## **Mission Creep and Concerns**

Mission creep relates to the military – political backdrop surrounding the use of military force. The wider or ambiguous the context is, the harder it is to define military roles or responsibilities in operations. For almost a decade before the 9/11 attacks, the term influenced all three levels of military operations -- strategic, operational, and tactical. Additionally, terms like consequence management, risk mitigation, and mission avoidance directly developed into both military and civilian lexicon from this effort.<sup>12</sup>

There are a multitude of examples of the military avoiding mission creep that ultimately caused some type of mission failure. Advocates for the First Gulf War may claim to have avoided mission creep as coalition operations focused on three simple goals: Mass combat power in Saudi Arabia, kick Iraqi forces out of Kuwait, and go home.

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<sup>10</sup> Henry C. Bartlett, Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes. "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning" In *Strategy and Force Planning*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Newport RI: US Naval War College, 2004) 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth L. Hillman, "Mission Creep in Military Lawyering," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* (Autumn, 2011): 567. The article provides analysis on how mission creep starting in 2001 prompted a fundamental shift in military lawyering from criminal law to operational law. Traditional norms and terminology of the military law professional changed to ensure military goal is achieved.



Senior military leaders, especially General Colin Powell, shaped, disciplined, and neutralized any discussion or effort to expand mission parameters, especially when the opportunity arose the during ground phase of the war to pursue fleeing Iraqi forces and remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Like most of his peers in the military, Powell's experience in Vietnam irrevocably shaped his desire to avoid another "quagmire". He viewed military power as a blunt instrument to employ only when achieving certain key conditions.<sup>13</sup> In order to set conditions for the liberation of Kuwait, all military planning efforts focused on the task at hand, not post-conflict considerations in Iraq.<sup>14</sup>

For over twenty years, scholars have referred to the U.S. intervention in Somalia as a prime example of mission creep. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. troops to deploy to Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope. The objectives for the mission were ill-defined under the initial United Nations mandate. When United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNISOM I-April 1992 to December 1992) failed to provide an effective security environment to allow aid workers to distribute relief, the U.S. took over and led UNISOM II (November 1992 – November 1994), but had the same challenges with vague mission objectives. However, after experiencing initial success, political leaders broadened the mission perimeters from securing food supplies and allowing safe delivery of humanitarian aid to employing conventional and special operations forces to hunt down warlords that could disrupt the emerging positive security environment. Initially perceived as neutral actors by the population, U.S. forces had now become active

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<sup>13</sup> Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey: Colin L. Powell* (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 303.

<sup>14</sup> Greg Fontenot, E.J Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point-The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 2.

threat to the clans. This led to the famous raid known as the Battle of Mogadishu, leading to the withdrawal of all U.S. forces five months later.<sup>15</sup>

In sum, mission creep was the catch all notion to articulate negative tension between the military and civilian leadership over where traditional operations end and stability operations began. The fear of misusing military force caused angst in the initial planning stages of military operations and campaigns. It also challenged planners to address the potential of unplanned for tasks and activities outside political guidance without reviewing force capabilities.<sup>16</sup>

### **Mission Creep and the Combatant Commands**

There are three drivers of mission creep that exist within COCOM planning and decision-making. The three factors are (1) expectations of the civil-military relationship; (2) the nature of foreign policy; and (3) the bureaucratic process of receiving strategic guidance. Each influence and shape military planning as they provide some element of predictability in order to counter an uncertain and complex operating environment.

The first factor, frustration between civilian leadership and the military over how to articulate “best military advice”, concerns the expectations of the outputs from the military’s planning process. The military places emphasis on details while the civilian leadership wants speed in options and to understand the cost, both political and fiscal, associated with those options. Neither party is currently satisfied with the existing state of dialogue. Janine Davidson, a public policy professor at George Mason University and

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), 11-17. Battle of Mogadishu occurred October 3, 1993. 18 Service members were killed in clashes with Somalian gunmen.

<sup>16</sup> Adam B. Siegel, “Mission Creep or Mission Understood?” *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Summer 2000): 113.

a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense – Plans/Policy during the first Obama administration, explains the friction between civilian policymakers and the military as a broken dialogue. She suggests that the frustration between civilian leaders and the military begins with cultural differences concerning the expectations of strategic guidance inputs into the combatant command’s planning system. “Military planners want detailed guidance from civilians regarding end-states and objectives that civilians often cannot provide up front....Civilian presidents and defense secretaries might be surprised to learn that it is considered their responsibility to determine ends and means without being first offered a menu of feasible options.”<sup>17</sup> This disconnect has led to civilians believing they are being “boxed in” by the military and the military feeling that their best military advise is being marginalized.<sup>18</sup>

Mission creep embedded in COCOM decision making and planning comes into play as a second-order effect to this tension. The sense that civilian policymakers are not competent to make strategy encourages military leaders to believe they alone know the right path to take in posturing U.S. strategic presence in their assigned regions.<sup>19</sup> This perception does not mean there are bad intentions from the commands towards civilian control of the military. However, it does bring to light why the COCOMs are becoming

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<sup>17</sup> Janine Davidson, “The Contemporary Presidency: Civil-Military Friction and Presidential Decision Making,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (March 2013): 140.

<sup>18</sup> Bob Woodard, *Obama’s Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010) xvii. Bob Woodard recounts President Obama’s friction with his military chain of command as he sought options for ending the war in Afghanistan. Woodard states a frustrated president felt ‘boxed in’ by his military commanders who were presenting him with only one real option – deploy 40K more troops for a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign.

<sup>19</sup> Linda Robinson, Paul D. Miller, John Gordon IV, Jeffrey Decker, Michael Schwille, and Raphael Cohen. *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2014), 48.

less accountable alternatives to embassies, enduring sources of threat inflation, and unyielding consumers of military resources.<sup>20</sup>

The second set of drivers is the COCOMs and their role in international affairs. Their growing influence allows participation and greater potential to shape American foreign policy. The COCOMs are well-funded, semi-autonomous, and unconventional hubs of U.S. foreign policy. Dana Priest, an investigative reporter for the Washington Post, wrote a three article series in September 2000 declaring the Combatant Commanders to be the equivalent of Roman Proconsuls during the Roman Empire.<sup>21</sup> She further elaborates argument in her 2004 book, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*, by describing an “incremental, little noticed, de facto” shift toward COCOM standing in international affairs in which the commander “fills a vacuum left by an indecisive White House, an atrophied State Department, and a distracted Congress.”<sup>22</sup>

Eleven years later, it is safe to assume that the COCOM's position in foreign affairs continues to grow in stature as they work to prevent conflict and shape the security environment in their assigned regions. The ascension again is not a military challenge to civil authority, but the acknowledgment that the COCOMs are striving to gain efficiencies and effectiveness in maintaining U.S. influence in the world.

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<sup>20</sup> Benjamin H. Friedman and Harvey M. Sapolisky, “Shut-down the US Combatant Commands” *DefenseNews.com*, 29 September 2013.  
<http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20130929/DEFREG02/309290014/Commentary-Shut-Down-US-Combatant-Commands> (accessed February 14, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Dana Priest, “A Four-Star Foreign Policy?” U.S. Commanders Wield Rising Clout, Autonomy,” *The Washington Post*, 28 September 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 14.

Finally, the third driver is the Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF). The GEF provides COCOMs with global prioritized end-states and strategic assumptions to allow planning to proceed and the allocation of resources to begin, but is open to criticism for being too open-ended in security cooperation tasks.

The GEF presents global posture and force management directives, security cooperation guidance, and presidential guidance for contingency planning, and incorporates the SECDEF's strategic priorities and policy aims. The centerpiece of the classified document is a requirement for COCOMs to develop campaign plans that integrate and synchronize 'steady-state,' or formally known as 'Phase 0', activities to achieve desired end states.<sup>23</sup> The overarching idea is that emphasis on steady state operations is cheaper in the long run and if done right, will save lives, as it should reduce the likelihood of a Phase III (force-on-force type) operation.

Despite providing strong and clear linkages from strategy to operational planning, the GEF also generates some elements of mission creep into COCOM planning. Being a classified document, the GEF naturally frames the conversation about stability tasks and other critical missions as internal to the Department of Defense only. The classification restricts some types and levels of interagency feedback / inputs. Additionally, the GEF remains tied to open-ended assessments of the COCOMs' theater security cooperation plans. Open-ended objectives give COCOMs flexibility to develop multiple solutions to assigned problem sets, however the disadvantage is that the Joint Staff may not have right tools or processes to evaluate or promote the right solution set.

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<sup>23</sup> Patrick C. Sweeney, "A Primer for Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF), Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), the Adaptive Planning and Execution (APEX) System, and Global Force Management (GFM)", Faculty Paper, U.S. Naval War College, 6 December 2013, 1-3.

Recently, the Joint Staff announced it was drafting forcing mechanisms into the next version of the GEF that will require the COCOMs to articulate achievable objectives into their campaign plans in order to improve visibility and better synchronize of steady-state operations.<sup>24</sup> Until the Secretary of Defense signs the new GEF, COCOM planning will still have the potential for mission creep.

## Summary

Joint Force doctrine stresses that commanders and joint planners need to “guard against the unintentional expansion of tasks and responsibilities associated with mission creep.”<sup>25</sup> This premise remains timeless. However, the old negative notion of mission creep that intimates that the military set the terms for its disengagement is dead and buried. The term is now more relevant towards self-imposed activity. The military’s own expansion of stability tasks that leads to larger demands on resources is the new reality.

The traditional approach to understanding issues related to mission creep is to ensure military activities nest with political objectives. Joint planning staffs, and ultimately the commanders, must have a conversation with policy makers to define clear and achievable mission goals.<sup>26</sup> If this conversation is not occurring during military operations, the first priority is rekindle or reopen the communication channel. Additionally, one must get past the aura of negativity associated with the term mission

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel A. Gilewitch, “Security Cooperation Strategic and Operational Guidance: Translating Strategy to Engagement.” DISAM Online Journal & News Source (October 2012). <http://www.disamjournal.org/articles/security-cooperation-strategic-and-operational-guidance-translating-strategy-to-engagement-773> (accessed 14 February 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3.07—Stability Operations*, Washington, DC, 29 September 2011, II-7. The joint manual also recommends to be mindful of mission creep and that commanders should plan transition and redeployment from the outset.

<sup>26</sup> Siegel, “Mission Creep or Mission Understood?”, 115.

creep. A better course of action is to adapt to it and understand it as an implied task; Leaders on joint planning staffs must be more creative and organizations more flexible to ensure success in an ever-changing, complex environment.

The next chapter provides a prime example of creative and flexible adaptation. Major General William Sidney Graves commanded roughly eight thousand American troops, dubbed the “Polar Bear Expedition”, during the Siberian Intervention of 1918. His orders were to remain strictly apolitical amidst a politically turbulent situation. As a result, he found himself constantly at odds with his Allied peers, the State Department, and various Russian groups. Historian Carl J. Richard asserts that the operation is a prime example of mission creep as initial planning goals completely changed once the troops deployed.<sup>27</sup> Senior commanders and joint planners can learn a great deal from Graves’ example.

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<sup>27</sup> Carl J. Richard, *When the United States invaded Russia*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 169. President Wilson’s reasons to intervene in Russia never materialized. MG Graves worked to define new operational parameters with policymakers while keeping an eye on the Allies. He concluded that the British, French, and Japanese forces in Siberia were all following self-serving political ambitions beyond the stated goals of the Allies, which were to protect supplies provided by the powers to their erstwhile Tsarist allies and to provide for the safe conduct of foreign allied troops, primarily Czechs, who were to exit Russia via Vladivostok.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **A Prime Example: The Siberian Intervention, 1918-1920**

There isn't a nation on earth that would not resent foreigners sending troops into their country for the purpose of putting this or that faction in charge of their Governmental machinery. The result is not only an injury to the prestige of the foreigners intervening, but is a great handicap to the faction the foreigner is trying to assist. The moment that the United States took sides in the Russian conflict, which was at variance with the solemn assurance made to the Russian people by President Wilson, her reputation for honesty of purpose and fair dealing was discredited.<sup>1</sup>

*General William S. Graves, Commander of the  
American Expeditionary Force in Siberia*

Although the 1919 Treaty of Versailles signaled the end of the World War I against Germany, it did not bring a definitive conclusion to U.S. or Allied military operations. For despite the return of troops from Western Europe, President Woodrow Wilson and the American government found itself stuck in the mess of the Russian Civil War with British and French troops in Northern Russia around Archangel, while Japanese, British, French, Polish, and forces of various other nationalities were in the Russian Far East near Vladivostok.<sup>2</sup>

The American intervention in Siberia, beginning in the summer of 1918 and ending with the withdrawal of American troops in the spring of 1920, illustrates the challenges associated with a poor civil-military relation, unaccountable military impacts to foreign policy, and the lack of comprehensive strategic guidance in managing resources. It is perhaps a classic example of mission creep as the initial goals of the intervention changed almost from the start. Planned as a way to keep Russia in the war, it failed to reestablish a second front in the East. Later, the intervention could not

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<sup>1</sup> William S. Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 82.

<sup>2</sup> Clarence Augustus Manning, *The Siberian Fiasco*, (New York: Library Publishers, 1952), 99.



destabilize or shape favorably the new Soviet government. Finally, it failed to disrupt the Japanese's desire for control of Siberia and Manchuria.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the challenges at the policy-strategy level, the performance of the U.S. military during the operation warrants a more positive appraisal associated with mission creep. Called "obstinate, difficult, and an uncooperative Commander" by the British and French, Major General William S. Graves carried out a vague policy provided to him directly from President Wilson in the *Aide Memoire*.<sup>4</sup> His efforts to communicate with senior policymakers and his rigid impartiality in executing strategic and operational tasks during the intervention saved his troops on multiple occasions and are examples for modern COCOM operations.

### **Why did the United States intervene in Russia?**

In the attempt to support the reestablishment of a second front against the Germans, historians have proposed up to six different theories to explain the U.S. Intervention into Siberia.<sup>5</sup> Each theory falls into one of two general schools of thought: Either the United States was willing to assist their wartime allies or it wanted to keep an

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<sup>3</sup> Richard, *When the United States invaded Russia*, 170. U.S. Army Chief of Staff Peyton C. March also warned President Wilson that an American intervention would be used as a cloak for Japanese imperialist schemes.

<sup>4</sup> Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, xi.

<sup>5</sup> Theories included: 1) The German War Prisoners Theory supported by historian Christopher Lasch. He argues that Wilson was concerned about rumors that armed war prisoners working for the Central Powers were attempting to control Siberia. 2) The Japanese Theory, advanced by John White and Betty Unterberger, maintains Wilson decided to intervene to prevent the Japanese from gaining control of region. 3) The Allied Pressure Theory suggested by Eugene P. Trani claims that Wilson decided to intervene due to pressure by the British and French to meet expectations as an Ally. 4) The Bolshevik Theory advocated by William Appleman Williams; Wilson intervenes to overthrow the Soviet Government. 5) The Czech Theory I by George F. Kennan, maintains the Wilson decided to intervene in Siberia in order to rescue the Czech Corps, so that the unit repositioned to the Western Front. 6) The Czech Theory II, argued by Robert J. Maddox, asserts that Wilson intervened in order to help the Czechs and Anti-Bolsheviks overthrow the Soviet government. The Czech Corps was a combat hardened force of 14,000 soldiers and headquartered in Vladivostok.

eye out for competitors like the Japanese or the new Soviet Government as it shaped post-war influence. No matter what the true cause of the intervention, it was clear that President Wilson and his senior advisors had reservations about sending troops to Russia. In fact, the debate over the intervention openly contradicts the sixth of Wilson's fourteen points as it advocates for the "evacuation from Russia of all foreign forces."<sup>6</sup> To avoid open hostilities with Russia and honor his idealism, Wilson chose to focus American efforts on guarding Allied war supplies and helping the Czech Legion's retrograde from Siberia.

The *Aide Memoire* conveys this guidance by advocating not to pick sides in Russian internal affairs and disagrees with the arguments for reestablishing an Eastern Front. However, it does approve three missions for the American expedition: first, guard war supplies and equipment; second, aid the Czech Legion's evacuation (includes the implied task to secure and operate the Trans-Siberian railroad); and third, provide humanitarian assistance.<sup>7</sup> The implied task is perhaps the most critical problem that required immediate attention. The Bolshevik Revolution had essentially shut down the Russian railway system and even stopped an American effort to provide three hundred engineers garrisoned along the Trans-Siberian line as advisors and technical directors in November 1917.<sup>8</sup> Czech legionnaires, who needed to secure an evacuation route, quickly

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret McMillian, *Paris 1919 – Six months that changed the world* (New York: Random House, 2003), 495.

<sup>7</sup> From the *Aide Memoire* (see Appendix A); Memo was actually drafted by President Wilson and published 17 July 1918. It argues in a self-contradictory way that the U.S. should not go to Russia but military action is permissible 'to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance.'

<sup>8</sup> Betty Miller Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918-1920*, (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1956), 8, 10.

demonstrated the importance of controlling the rail line by attacking Bolshevik elements along the rail line to Vladivostok—the hub for Allied operations.<sup>9</sup>

As the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) Siberia Commander, Graves assumed command of two understrength infantry regiments, the 27<sup>th</sup> (“Wolfhounds”) and the 31<sup>st</sup> (“Polar Bears”). The total assigned personnel was less than one full strength infantry regiment at authorized strength. The rest of his force came from his own 8<sup>th</sup> Division in California. Included were a few more infantry companies, a field hospital, an ambulance company, and a telegraph company as well as intelligence and other staff personnel from the division headquarters. The total U.S. commitment was approximately nine thousand personnel, with less than half as actual combat forces.<sup>10</sup>

Upon arrival in Vladivostok on 1 September 1918, Graves quickly discovered how chaotic the operating environment had become as both American infantry regiments were in combined operations with the Japanese against the Bolsheviks.<sup>11</sup> The regiments had deployed three weeks before Graves and had been duped by the Japanese commander into fighting beside him.<sup>12</sup> Finding the regiments in total disarray, Graves immediately established his command authority and notified the Allies, especially the Japanese, of the caveats placed on his units by President Wilson.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Willett, *Russian Sideshow—America’s undeclared war, 1918-1920* (Washington DC: Brassey, 2003), xxvii.

<sup>10</sup> Department of the Army, *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War--American Expeditionary Forces: General Headquarters, Armies, Army Corps, Services of Supply, Separate Forces, Vol. I* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1988), 385-389.

<sup>11</sup> Graves, *America’s Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 57. As stated earlier, both the 27<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> IN Regiments arrived three weeks before General Graves. Japanese General Kikuzo Otani told the U.S. Commanders he was in charge for the Allied effort in the Far East operations.

<sup>12</sup> Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War with Russia*, (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1977), 61. When American troops walked down the gangplanks at Vladivostok, they entered a world in which chaos was the normal state of affairs. The city teemed with thousands of military and civilian personnel from more than a dozen nations, and no one was in charge.

By early November 1918, the AEF established security along the Trans-Siberian railroad within their sector, reduced the number of fighting engagements with Bolshevik elements, and settled into garrison-type activities in Vladivostok. Everything changed for Graves and his soldiers with the signing of the German armistice on November 11, 1918. The Allied efforts in establishing a second front were no longer required, the Czech Legion had no incentive to fight and desired to go home, and now in question was the overall legitimacy of the American intervention.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Civil-Military Dialogue**

Three months after the Armistice, Graves requested to return his force to the United States. Denied by President Wilson, with little explanation coming from the War or State Departments, the General concluded that he must initiate a new dialogue about the strategic direction and scope of the Siberian expedition with American policymakers. He believed to honor the intent of the *Aide Memoire*, still the only strategic document provided by the Wilson Administration, that all parties (White, Bolshevik and Allies) involved in the Russia Civil War must be included in the process to improve conditions. Clearly, he would not get much support from his Allied partners (England, France and Japan) as the Armistice made no difference to them. Their strategic and operational focus in Siberia remained anti-Bolshevik.<sup>14</sup>

He also understood it was going to be a challenge to work with the State Department as it wanted to maintain the status quo in the towns along the railroad line, which were in charge by the Whites. State Department personnel being co-located with

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<sup>13</sup> Richard, *When the United States invaded Russia*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 96.

railroad administrators also created a problem. This arrangement convinced Graves that the U.S. was giving aid and advice exclusively to the Whites and also feeding Bolshevik resentment of Americans.<sup>15</sup>

Graves's only option in the face of impending mission creep was to compel Washington's participation in a discussion on strategic direction by enforcing rigid impartiality. His new operational approach declared that the AEF would not take hostile action against the Russian people unless for self-defense or protecting property for which the AEF was responsible. The decision was critical as it was within the memoir's mission parameters and gave some direction in a post-Armistice environment.

This approach did not come without controversy. Throughout February 1919, Japanese forces were in a continuous engagement with the Bolsheviks. Graves repeatedly refused to provide assistance to Japanese as their support for White and Cossack military units, under the pretext of combatting bolshevism, promoted atrocities throughout the region. For example, a Cossack Cavalry unit, reinforced by a Japanese infantry unit, conduct its own campaign of terror, extortion, and bloodshed in the town of Habarovsk. The activity was so harsh that it eventually caused some Cossack troops to mutiny and seek protection from American troops. The Japanese demanded the return of these soldiers to face "internal" discipline.<sup>16</sup> The incident made it to both American and Japanese press, but it did not spark any significant response by the Wilson Administration. In a 28 March 1919 letter, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Peyton C. March seemed agreeable to Graves' impartiality and concept of duty associated with the Siberia mission. "Keep a stiff upper lip, I am going to stand by you until Hell freezes

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<sup>15</sup> Graves, *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 97.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

over”.<sup>17</sup> With the backing of the U.S. Army and the implied support of the War Department, Graves continued this strategy through the Siberian campaign. At every opportunity that might lead to a strategic discussion, he attempted to coerce the U.S. senior civilian leadership to participate. Despite the damage the inquiries were doing to Grave’s reputation, no one else was asking the hard questions for the sake of U.S soldiers deployed in Siberia.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Aide Memoire as a Strategic Guidance document***

On 4 August 1918, during a secret meeting at a railroad station in Kansas City, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker handed the *Aide Memoire* to Graves and informed him that he and his soldiers were heading to Siberia. Baker also directed Graves to view the document as the policy of the United States in Russia and to tread lightly with the mission as he “will be walking on eggs loaded with dynamite.”<sup>19</sup> The document was similar to today’s strategic guidance documents in that it was vague and open to interpretation.

Graves focused on the reference to non-interference with Russian sovereignty and developed a commander’s philosophy of impartiality and neutrality. He also quickly realized, after a few requests for more information, that State and War Departments had no common interpretation of Wilson’s *memoire*. For example, there was no coherent guidance on dealing with the Bolsheviks. The U.S. State Department sent word to their

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 160. Thought this was a funny thing to say to MG Graves when he is freezing in Siberia.

<sup>18</sup> General Graves’s position of impartiality after the Armistice was creating friction with the British, French and Japanese commanders as they were anti-Bolshevik in policy and execution. The U.S. State Department also supported the White Government. Complaints about Graves as non-cooperative were growing in number and frequency towards the Wilson Administration.

<sup>19</sup> Graves, *America’s Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 2-4.

embassies not to recognize or even meet with them. However, Graves could not take the same position in such a black and white manner. Graves would have a small force in Siberia and assumed that he would eventually have to negotiate with the Russians (both White and Red) to evacuate the Czech Legion safely.<sup>20</sup> This approach would clash with anti-Bolshevik ideals in the State Department and among the Allies. However, from a military perspective, it provided direction for adaptation and set limits to the potential for mission creep in the expedition.

With the change of mission due to the Armistice, there was no refinement of the *Aide Memoire* by the Wilson Administration. General Graves continued to base every AEF mission on maintaining neutrality as directed by the original document. This was important as his force was now constrained in its ability to meet the ongoing complexity of the operation. It was not allowed to grow in structure to face new threats or withdrawal due to challenge of maintaining complete impartiality.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, impartiality influenced AEF command and control (C2) as it provided a weighted criteria for mission selection and drove a continuous review of objectives. Missions like protecting allied stores and guarding natural resources that promoted stability in the region easily met approval when assessed. However, guarding the Trans-Siberian railway increasingly conflicted with this criteria as it tended to favor pro-White operations.

In sum, under General Graves' leadership, the military filled the void in strategic guidance and was effective in adapting to the complexity of the Siberian mission.

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<sup>20</sup> Manning, *The Siberian Fiasco*, 90-91.

<sup>21</sup> Judith A. Lockett, "The Siberian Intervention: Military Support of Foreign Policy," *Military Review* 64, No. 4, (April 1984), 61.

Impartiality, the determining criteria for missions, provided a guiding purpose for AEF operations. Graves, like today's Combatant Commanders, commanded in an environment with a lot of potential for the expansion of tasks. Graves chose to set limits for himself and the AEF to support the specified strategic guidance received in the Aide Memoire.

## **Implications to Foreign Policy and Force Planning**

Modern historians generally accept that the Allied incursion into Siberia and Northern Russia did not achieve significant results in shaping the Russian Civil War.<sup>22</sup> The small forces deployed could not turn the tide of the Bolshevik Revolution. White Russian forces and the overall anti-communist movement in the country faced a slow death. In fact, some may argue that the intervention did more harm than good.<sup>23</sup>

However, AEF operations in Siberia suggest some foreign policy and force planning lessons to modern-day COCOM planners of steady-state operations. The Wilson Administration attempted to adopt a hedging strategy in dealing with the unknowns of the Russian Civil War.<sup>24</sup> This approach seeks flexibility to minimize risk to respond to potential problems, but overestimates others' capabilities in foreign policy and is very costly in force planning.

For the sake of conserving limited combat power and resources, General Graves and his forces had to accept a higher level of risk to both Russian and Allied relationships

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<sup>22</sup> John Ward, *With the Die-Hards in Siberia*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 207.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 208. Col Ward highlights that the British Army broke so many promises to the White Russian Government that they formed positive willful obstruction.

<sup>24</sup> Henry C. Bartlett, G. Paul Holman, Jr., and Timothy E. Somes. In "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning" *Strategy and Force Planning 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), 29.



than other governmental agencies. The Armistice with Germany turned off American mobilization for soldiers to reinforce or sustain the intervention.<sup>25</sup> Graves countered this lack of future manpower by more prudent use of current resources and force levels. He directed the AEF to consolidate outposts, increase coordination and information sharing with allies, and became even more selective in accepting new missions not aligned to his core tasks.

Today, COCOMs face similar challenges in their security cooperation planning and operations. The number of U.S. soldiers on the ground and the amount of funding provided to build partner nation capability tend to reflect the level of U.S. commitment to potential partners. In a resource constrained environment, a hedging approach in “Phase Zero” that requires a high number of troops across a region or globally may be unsustainable and warrants a review at U.S. strategic direction.

## Summary

In his 1920 annual report to the Secretary of the War and Congress, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Peyton C. March admired the accomplishments of the MG Graves and the AEF in Siberia. “The manner in which this difficult and arduous task was performed is worthy of the best traditions of the Army.”<sup>26</sup> The American expedition guarded war supplies and equipment and coordinated for disposition. The AEF also facilitated the

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<sup>25</sup> Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1955), 378. In early February 1919, Secretary of War Baker and Army Chief of Staff March were not able to justify an Army structure of 500,000-man force to the House Military Affairs Committee, a force barely capable to garrison overseas possessions. It was clear the Army would rapidly drawdown and commit no additional forces to Siberia.

<sup>26</sup> Department of the Army, *Chief of Staff 1920 Report to Secretary of the War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 100. Quote also commonly appears in several monographs and student papers on the Siberian Intervention.

Czech Legion's evacuation back to Eastern Europe and provided humanitarian assistance through support to the American Red Cross.<sup>27</sup>

Graves accomplished all of his objectives while attempting to resolve the strategic guidance gap that materialized when the Armistice became a game changer for U.S.-Russian policy. His efforts to maintain impartiality in Siberia may have created some friction with Allies and the State Department, but it did generate some positives in the intervention's complex operating environment.

The lessons of the intervention are transferable to the current military environment, especially to Combatant Commanders. Knowing how to lead operations into a hostile and austere environment without a coherent strategic purpose, having the self-discipline to manage mission creep internally, and maximizing limited access to resources are skills desired by any combatant commander or planner.

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<sup>27</sup> See Appendix B for chronology of AEF-Siberia Operations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Adapting Joint Planning & Recommendations**

Contemporary operations, especially counter-terrorism, lend themselves to opportunities for mission creep as the civil-military dialogue or argument over missions and resources is muted.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the burden to police mission requirements often rests with the military. The Siberian Intervention is an example of disciplining the progression of tasks while trying to fill a void in the strategic direction. In short, it is adapting to mission creep, not avoiding it.

This idea is applicable to the joint planning process. COCOM staffs can adapt their process in two ways. First, joint planners should expect some form of expansion in tasks and account for the purpose of the added mission. A key takeaway is that planning is always dynamic and needs an element of “sense-making.” Sense-making, a term used in planning for complex endeavors, spans a range of activities that starts with initial development of situational awareness and ends with the initiation of necessary movement for action.<sup>2</sup> Graves achieved this by focusing on upward coordination and allowing more detailed planning and execution to fall to subordinate units.<sup>3</sup> Second, given that stability operations typically burden the land forces, the Army and Marine Corps must provide the direction and responsibility for adaptation among the service components once they receive the mission from a COCOM. Both services have extensive backgrounds in this

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<sup>1</sup> Kent Roach, “Preventing What? Post 9/11 Mission Amnesia and Mission Creep”, In *The Long Decade: How 9/11 Changed the Law*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 82-83. For example, counter-terrorism policies are dynamic and respond to the evolving nature of terrorism. Mission Creep is expected and not considered inherently bad. Nevertheless, the added mission requires an open dialogue on the necessity and wisdom of the requirement. Sometimes, the dialogue does not occur between civilian and military.

<sup>2</sup> David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes, *Planning Complex Endeavors* (Washington, DC: DoD Command and Control Research Program, 2007), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Graves. *America’s Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, 57.

subject and would be best suited to take the lead in planning.<sup>4</sup> However, it is a double edge sword as the Army and Marines, both as COCOM Service components and Title X Services, will also take the majority of the blame if mission creep goes uncontrolled.

Adapting the joint planning process and relying on the Army and Marines for leadership in stability operations is a partial solution. Grave's actions and decisions in Siberia are similar to what COCOMs may implement to further adapt to mission creep: 1) internally discipline the growth of steady-state missions in order to assist the civil-military dialogue; 2) assess COCOM progress in supporting foreign policy by reviewing its management of partnership programs; and 3) review the COCOM demand signal at global force planning conferences.

### **Assisting the Civil-Military Dialogue**

In the book, *Road to Rainbow*, Henry Gole highlighted that the United States had neglected its military in a shameful manner during the Interwar period (1919 to 1939). With a Congress and public hesitant to get involved in other nations' issues and Presidents who did not want to get ahead of public opinion, he concluded it was a miracle that the military created strategic and operational continuity in its Color and Rainbow plans. These planning efforts and the small, but extremely capable, group of military officers who led them ensured the nation was not totally unprepared for war.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, *American Civil-Military Relations – The Soldier and the State in a New Era* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009), 113. Chapter Six of this book, "Winning Wars, Not Just Battles: Expanding the Military Profession to Incorporate Stability Operations" by Nadia Schadlow and Richard A. Lacquement Jr., emphasizes expanding the military profession to incorporate Stability Operations. Recognizing that U.S. Army and Marines have extensive historical experiences that provide a positive foundation and make them best suited to take the lead in fostering improvements in the military's preparedness for stability operations.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Gole, *The Road to Rainbow – Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), xvi.

The intent of the previous statement is not to encourage a debate over whether the United States has a grand strategy or if it needs to articulate one. Some noted critics, however, believe that current US political and military leaders seem more inclined to equate strategy with listing desired goals instead of actually determining how to achieve them within the foreseeable fiscal limitations.<sup>6</sup> More than creating lists of aspirational goals, actually doing strategy requires solving the ends-ways-means equation for each item listed while simultaneously making sense of the whole. COCOM staffs can fill the gap by defining operational objectives with a high degree of clarity and begin disciplining themselves on the potential expansion of new tasks. This effort should promote increased communication between civilian and military senior leadership on broader policy issues and the strategic aims of any designated campaign.

Just like General Graves in Siberia, there are risks to this approach. Critics, like Andrew Bacevich, would argue the described approach fails to allow an alternative element of national power to participate and influence the process. It also burdens military staffs to initiate collaboration while potentially isolating other agencies.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, it can further irritate the divides in the current civil-mil relationship. During the Siberian Intervention, State Department officials opposed Graves's efforts to find common ground in providing fairness regarding Bolshevik affairs, especially after the Whites committed atrocities.<sup>8</sup> The blowback on General Graves was severe. The FBI

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D Watts, "Regaining Strategic Competence," *Strategy for the Long Haul Series*, Washington, DC, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009, viii.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew F. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism – How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 215.

<sup>8</sup> Richard, *When the United States invaded Russia*, 154-155. On 26 June 1919, General Graves reported that White elements have stopped all supplies from going into certain areas that claimed to be Bolshevik. As result, 40,000 people starved in those designated areas. State Department officials ignored the reports and continued the flow of supplies to the White government committing the atrocities.

put Graves under surveillance during the Red Scare because he refused to carry out actions against the Bolsheviks when in Russia. His neutrality, encouraged by President Wilson, ended up harming him when he returned home.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these risks, there is a greater need. A renewed conversation on strategic direction would marginalize the potential of self-induced mission creep for the military. The other benefit, if one subscribes to Davidson's assessment that the relationship is broken, is that the civil-mil relationship can only improve.

### **Accessing Partnership programs**

Without a long-term strategy, Mission creep inevitably occurs when short-term problems dominate a planning team's focus. This lack of direction, or focus, provides more opportunities to favor quick, limited duration money programs that can address stability tasks with partner nations in steady-state operations. Programs like Global Train & Equip and other Section 1206 operations for COCOMs have been great enablers to U.S. foreign policy by building partnership capacity in allied and partner nations. The programs mostly address time-sensitive, "new and emerging" counter-terrorist operations. COCOMs can also use these programs to support long term stability operations, but there is a catch. Funding is on a yearly basis and requires an approval packet within annual prescribed milestones. This battle rhythm of requesting access to partnership funding has generated concerns that COCOM staffs are now "sloppy" in attending to long term joint planning.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 42.

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Beth Grill, Joe Hagler, Lianne Kennedy-Boudali, and Christopher Paul. "How Successful Are U.S. Efforts in Building Capacity in Countries? – A Framework to Access the Global Train and Equip 1206 Program", Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 2011, 20-21. The study reviewed

The obvious concern is that it becomes dangerous to focus exclusively on steady-state operations when planning for emerging requirements.<sup>11</sup> Also, the lack of direction creates a gap when short term planning fails to have some form of assessment. Assessments assist in making decisions. A rushed timeline usually results in a poor assessment of progress and can steer the planning effort off-course in terms of cost-effectiveness. COCOM engagement programs can appear as nothing more than “walking around with money” if not carefully integrated into a larger campaign plan with specific goals, timelines, and assessment criteria.<sup>12</sup> For example, COCOMs have access to over forty-nine separate programs and authorities to arm and train foreign forces. There is no public reporting required on the expenditures of most of these funds, therefore the ability to properly conduct assessments may be questionable.<sup>13</sup>

The most immediate fix is for COCOMs to develop clear and attainable objectives that include an empowered assessment mechanism. The assessment requirement will force more analysis on ends, ways, and means to ensure the COCOM gets more bang for the money utilized through congressional programs like Section 1206. This may require more acceptance of risk as some countries in a region may not get the funding they are

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COCOM processes on certain programs like Section 1206 and determined that the planning staffs were consumed with packet submission process; ignoring other options to meet campaign objectives.

<sup>11</sup> Talbot C. Imlay and Monica D. Toft, *The Fog of Peace and War Planning*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 252.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Marks, “Rethinking the Geographic Combatant Commands,” *Interagency Journal Vol. I*, Issue 1, (Fall 2010), 21.

<sup>13</sup> Lora Lumpe, “U.S. Military Aid to Central Asia: The DOD’s Walking around Money—The Uncounted Aid”, *Occasional Paper Series No. 1*, Open Society Foundations, October 2010, 25. Another interest fact is Section 166a of Title 10 U.S. Code allows the Joint Chiefs to Staff to allocate \$75 million annually to combatant commanders for “special interest programs” like force training, joint exercises, military education, and training for foreign countries. There is no public report on how much each commander spends and for what purposes.

used to or were previously promised, but it will prioritize limited resources, both money and troop presence, and drive individual programs into a more complete whole.

In summary, General Graves operated in a resource constrained environment that led him to be very selective in missions that could ultimately affect U.S. relations with Russia. He used screening criteria to assist him in making some hard choices (some included assuming risk with Allies) in dealing with both the Bolsheviks and Whites equally. COCOM management of partnership programs may now be in the same boat. As budget belts become tight, arguments over sustainability versus flexibility will require some type of assessment or validation system. It is prudent that COCOM staffs begin to refocus on this internal effort. Without a hard start on this issue, unnecessary mission creep will continue to prevail.<sup>14</sup>

## **Reviewing Global Force Planning**

General Graves and today's Combatant Commanders share common ground in dealing with the ramifications of a drawdown from a major conflict on their future force planning. For Graves, the Armistice with Germany initiated a rapid demobilization of American forces, ensured that no additional troops were coming to Siberia, and forced a fundamental change in the way the AEF committed itself to new missions. Combatant Commanders are also dealing with a drawdown from Afghanistan that has initiated a downsizing force review and implementation of manpower cuts. This top-down fiscal approach has created an emphasis on steady-state operations for COCOMs as it is cheaper to deal with a problem in Phase 0 than in Phase III. Caught in the middle, the

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<sup>14</sup> Dominic J. Caraccilo. *Beyond Guns and Steel—A War Termination Strategy* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger International, 2011), 147.



Services are trying to answer the demand of COCOM steady-state operations while, like Graves, maintaining their force structure. For example, the Army is attempting to address this need with its Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept. The RAF aligns the Army's service-retained forces and capabilities with a COCOM and prepares them for regional missions.<sup>15</sup> The belief is that RAF addresses both emerging and enduring requirements of the COCOMs with forces that have a better understanding of the operational environment where they are most likely to deploy. But the Army has the final say on the use of the designated RAF force, not the Combatant Commander, setting up a potential clash over force structure and missions.

The debate over the demand versus supply of the Army's service-retained forces is the primer for the third and final recommendation to allocate all of these forces to the COCOMs. This Global Force Management (GFM) action would enable COCOM planning to transition from a demand-based methodology to a supply-based one. In short, forcing the COCOMs do strategically more with less or, at least, a finite resource.

The Army, as part of the joint force, must respond to the expressed needs of the COCOMs while maintaining the readiness and ability to mass in order to conduct high-end combat operations.<sup>16</sup> It believes that retaining the capability to fight and win major combat operations provides the best flexibility for the nation, while also justifying Army force structure. The COCOMs maintain that if they do a good job with their theater campaigns, the likelihood of major combat operations or the need for a large scale contingency plan is extremely unlikely. Combatant Commanders prefer to utilize all of

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<sup>15</sup> Kimberly Field, James Leatmont, and Jason Charland, "Regionally Aligned Forces: Business Not as Usual," *Parameters* 43 (Autumn 2013), 56.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

the Army's service-retained forces through the formal GFM allocation process. The COCOM's use of the forces for stability operations is a better justification of force structure than regionally aligning forces only to have the COCOM quickly outstrip the anticipated supply.

The Strategic Landpower White Paper, signed by the heads of the Army, Marine Corps and Special Operations Forces, seems to support the COCOM point of view on the use of service-retained forces. The paper acknowledges that the combat power overmatch by the joint force is insufficient for achieving strategic success and that land forces must develop strategies to accomplish all ten missions in the defense strategic guidance.<sup>17</sup>

The primary missions of the U.S. Armed Forces range from countering terrorism to conducting humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and other operations that are central to engagements and stability with nations and other political groups. COCOMs better serve these types of engagement as they have a better track record for inclusion with other services and elements of national power. Therefore, the elimination of service-retained forces through global assignment or allocation is the next logistical step to make a regional engagement approach more capable and cost-effective.

## Summary

Military planning will remain an uncertain endeavor.<sup>18</sup> In order to mitigate ambiguity, there must be an expectation of some level of mission creep in today's

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<sup>17</sup> Department of the Army, *TRADOC White Paper, Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, Washington DC, May 2013, 1-5.

<sup>18</sup> Talbot C. Imlay and Monica Duffy Toft, *The Fog of Peace and War Planning*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 4.

military operations, steady-state or otherwise. Again, this is not a bad circumstance as the added requirement should generate an evaluation or discussion among decision-makers over the worthiness of any new missions. Commanders and planners need more of this civilian – military dialogue in order to solve the ends-ways-means strategic equation and garner the right mission with the appropriate resources to achieve lasting success in today’s challenging environment.

Additionally, there are other factors that military planners must be aware of in order to adapt to the complexity of mission creep. This study has emphasized through Graves’s actions in Siberia that civil-military relationship will influence military planning as both groups have different outlooks and interests on the same problem set. This is also true for the Services. Tensions between COCOMs and the Services is an everyday occurrence in military planning.<sup>19</sup> Assigning regionally align forces to the COCOMs will alleviate some of that tension (while no doubt creating others). Lastly, staff discipline, like the recommendation to assess COCOM partnership programs, helps find a balance between encouraging innovating planning while avoiding irresponsibility.

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<sup>19</sup> Marks, “Rethinking the Geographic Combatant Commands,” 20.

## CONCLUSION

[This text] does not contain any magic formula to follow, nor does it offer any secret key to unlock the door to the Nation's resources. Success comes only from the hard work of staff officers who apply sound principles to whatever immediate situation is under consideration.<sup>1</sup>

-Lieutenant Colonel Leonard L. Lerwill

While joint doctrine stresses that commanders and joint planners need to “guard against the unintentional expansion of tasks and responsibilities associated with mission creep,” they should no longer view it as a four-letter word.<sup>2</sup> In today's complex planning environment, one should expect to receive political guidance with vague or conflicting instructions. This is not a value judgement, but a reflection of the turbulent times. Stability tasks dominate the majority of operational planning at the COCOM level. The complexity and the drive for resources associated with these types of operations presents challenges for joint planning teams. Historical military operations like the Siberian Intervention offer two overarching lessons for military planners.

First, transitions from war to peace are always uncertain. Planners must maintain a strategic focus by understanding the operational environment and continuously reframing objectives and end states to parallel the change. Threats to the achievement of the mission (actors and conditions – physical, ethical, psychological, political and economic) also demand ongoing assessments to remain aligned. Additionally, missions need to continue to be limited and discreet, but will often occur under very broad and, sometimes, vaguely defined conditions. Not much has changed since the fall of Baghdad

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard L. Lerwill, ed., Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-211: The Personnel Replacement System in the United States Army. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1954, v.

<sup>2</sup> Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3.07—Stability Operations*, Washington, DC, 29 September 2011, II-7. The joint manual also recommends to be mindful of mission creep and plan transitions and redeployment from the outset.

in 2003 when, commenting on the lack of whole of government planning, Secretary of State Colin Powell allegedly told the President that “the national security decision-making process was broken.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore by default, planners should expect and prepare for the inevitable expansion of requirements.

Second, military interventions always have layers of political – strategic outcomes that are often not articulated. Ideally, military leaders and civilian policymakers identify mission objectives upfront; but one area that regularly comes into play is the discussion on how much force should be committed to a military operation. For example, the force management level (FML) decision process, typically conducted by the President and his senior advisors, provides visibility to political decision-making and can communicate strategic guidance to military commanders and planners.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, it sometimes misses the mark in matching resources to requirements in the existing complex operating environment.<sup>5</sup> The key takeaway here for joint planners is when forces do not sufficiently match requirements, they must attempt to reduce risk by lowering the profile and minimizing the cost of a given military operation to allow political maneuvering. However, in an era of strategic ambiguity, planners must also be prepared to employ follow-on forces to support expanded requirements if conditions change.

It is increasingly more important for joint planning teams to have a disciplined approach to address the consequences of an ever dynamic political-strategic environment.

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 39.

<sup>4</sup> Morian H. Halperin, “The President and the Military.” *Foreign Affairs.com*, January 1972. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/24318/morian-h-halperin/the-president-and-the-military> (accessed 14 February 2015. Presidents have used ad hoc or special control measures to secure information or options on military questions. FML is a modern day control measure used by the U.S. Presidency over military operations.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Hicks, “Invigorating Defense Governance: A Beyond Goldwater-Nicholas Phase 4 Report.” Washington, DC: Center of Strategic and International Studies, March 2008, Ch1, 4.

Historically, the military has hedged strategically to maintain flexibility at great financial cost.<sup>6</sup> COCOMs are at the crossroads concerning strategic direction. Adopting these two planning principles and three recommendations will have positive effects towards the strategic direction and cost-effectiveness of current efforts. By adapting to mission creep, COCOM planning teams will release some frustration, create fiscal discipline, and define strategic objectives based on actual capability.

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<sup>6</sup> Steven R. Charbonneau, "Defense Cuts vs Military Flexibility." *Global Security.org*, August 2, 2011. <http://sitrep.globalsecurity.org/articles/110802785-defense-cuts-vs-military-flexi.htm> (accessed 14 February 2015). Charbonneau advocates that maintaining enough flexibility for the U.S. military to handle every new foreign policy requirement may be untenable due to the cost of defense spending and force structure.

## Appendix A

The Secretary of State to the Allied Ambassadors:

### Aide Memoire<sup>1</sup>

The whole heart of the people of the United States is in the winning of this war. The controlling purpose of the Government of the United States is to do everything that is necessary and effective to win it. It wishes to cooperate in every practicable way with the allied governments, and to cooperate ungrudgingly; for it has no ends of its own to serve and believes that the war can be won only by common council and intimate concert of action. It has sought to study every proposed policy or action in which its cooperation has been asked in this spirit, and states the following conclusions in the confidence, that if it finds itself obliged to decline participation in any undertaking or course of action, it will be understood that it does so only because it deems itself precluded from participating by imperative considerations either of policy or fact.

In full agreement with the allied governments and upon unanimous advice of the Supreme War Council, the Government of the United States adopted, upon its entrance into the war, a plan for taking part in the fighting on the western front into which all its resources of men and material were to be put, and put as rapidly as possible, and it has carried out this plan with energy and success, pressing its execution more and more rapidly forward and literally putting into it the entire energy and executive force of the nation. This was its response, its very willing and hearty response, to what was the unhesitating judgment alike of its own military advisers and of the advisers of the allied governments. It is now considering, at the suggestion of the Supreme War Council, the possibility of making very considerable additions even to this immense programme which, if they should prove feasible at all, will tax the industrial processes of the United States and the shipping facilities of the whole group of associated nations to the utmost. It has thus concentrated all its plans and all its resources upon this single absolutely necessary object.

In such circumstances it feels it to be its duty to say that it cannot, so long as the military situation on the western front remains critical, consent to break or slacken the force of its present effort by diverting part of its military force to other points or objectives. The United States is at a great distance from the field of action on the western front; it is at a much greater distance from any other field of action. The instrumentalities by which it is to handle its armies and its stores have at great cost and with great difficulty been created in France. They do not exist elsewhere. It is practicable for her to do a great deal in France; it is not practicable for her to do anything of importance or on a large scale upon any other field. The American Government, therefore, very respectfully requested its Associates to accept its deliberate judgment that it should not dissipate its force by attempting important operations elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> George F. Kennan, *The Decision to Intervene* (Princeton: Prince University Press, 1958), 482-485.

It regards the Italian front as closely coordinated with the western front, however, and is willing to divert a portion of its military forces from France to Italy if it is the judgment and wish of the Supreme War Council that it should do so. It wishes to defer to the decision of the Commander-in-Chief in this matter, as it could wish to defer in all others, particularly because it considers these two fronts so related as to be practically but separate parts of a single line and because it would be necessary that any American troops sent to Italy should be subtracted from the number used in France and be actually transported across French territory from the ports now used by armies of the United States.

It is the clear and fixed judgment of the Government of the United States, arrived at after repeated and very searching reconsiderations of the whole situation in Russia, that military intervention there would add to the present sad confusion in Russia rather than cure it, injure her rather than help her, and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against Germany. It cannot, therefore, take part in such intervention or sanction it in principle. Military intervention would, in its judgment, even supposing it to be efficacious in its immediate avowed object of delivering an attack upon Germany from the east, be merely a method of making use of Russia, not a method of serving her. Her people could not profit by it, if they profited by it at all, in time to save them from their present distresses, and their substance would be used to maintain foreign armies, not to reconstitute their own. Military action is admissible in Russia, as the Government of the United States sees the circumstances, only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavic kinsmen and to steady any efforts at self government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. Whether from Vladivostok or from Murmansk and Archangel, the only legitimate object for which American or allied troops can be employed, it submits, is to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces and to render such aid as may be acceptable to the Russians in the organization of their own self-defense. For helping the Czecho-Slovaks there is immediate necessity and sufficient justification. Recent developments have made it evident that that it is in the interest of what the Russian people themselves desire, and the Government of the United States is glad to contribute the small force at its disposal for that purpose. It yields, also, to the judgment of the Supreme Command in the matter of establishing a small force at Murmansk, to guard the military stores at Kola and to make it safe for Russian forces to come together in organized bodies in the north. But it owes it to frank counsel to say that it can go no further than these modest and experimental plans. It is not in a position and has no expectation of being in a position, to take part in organized intervention in adequate force from either Vladivostok or Murmansk and Archangel. It feels that it ought to add, also, that it will feel at liberty to use the few troops it can spare only for the purposes here stated and shall feel obliged to withdraw these forces, in order to add them to the forces at the western front, if the plans in whose execution it is now intended that they should develop into others inconsistent with the policy to which the Government of the United States feels constrained to restrict itself.



At the same time the Government of the United States wishes to say with the utmost cordiality and good will that none of the conclusions here stated is meant to wear the least color of criticism of what other governments associated against Germany may think it wise to undertake. It wishes in no way to embarrass their choices of policy. All that is intended here is a perfectly frank and definite statement of the policy which the United States feels obliged to adopt for herself and in the use of her own military forces. The Government of the United States does not wish it to be understood that in so restricting, its own activities it is seeking, even by implication, to set limits to the action or to define the policies of its Associates.

It hopes to carry out the plans for safeguarding, the rear of the Czecho-Slovaks operating from Vladivostok in a way that will place it and keep it in close cooperation with a small military force like its own from Japan, and if necessary from the other Allies, and that it will assure it of the cordial accord of all the allied powers; and it proposes to ask all associated in this course of action to unite in assuring the people of Russia in the most public and solemn manner that none of the governments uniting in action either in Siberia or in northern Russia contemplates any interference of any kind with the political sovereignty of Russia, any intervention in her internal affairs, or any impairment of her territorial integrity either now or hereafter, but that each of the associated powers has the single object of affording such aid as shall be acceptable, and only such aid as shall be acceptable, to the Russian people in their endeavor to regain control their own affairs, their own territory and their own destiny.

It is the hope and purpose of the Government of the United States to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to send to Siberia a commission of merchants, agricultural experts, labour advisers, Red Cross Representatives, and agents of the Young Men's Christian Association accustomed to organizing the best methods of spreading useful information and rendering educational help of a modest sort, in order in some systematic manner to relieve the immediate economic necessities of the people there in every way for which opportunity may open. The execution of this plan will follow and will not be permitted to embarrass the military assistance rendered in the rear of the westward-moving forces of the Czecho-Slovaks.

Department of State, Washington, July 17, 1918.

## **Appendix B**

### **Chronology<sup>2</sup>**

#### **1917**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 14 March    | Establishment of the Russian Provisional Government |
| 15 March    | Abdication of the Czar                              |
| 22 March    | U.S. recognition of the Provisional Government      |
| 15 December | Bolshevik-German armistice                          |

#### **1918**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 12 January | First Japanese cruiser arrives in Vladivostok                         |
| 3 March    | Bolsheviks sign Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germans                  |
| 26 March   | Bolsheviks agree to permit Czechs to return to Europe via Vladivostok |
| 30 March   | Reports on German war prisoners in Siberia                            |
| 4 April    | First Czech forces arrive in Vladivostok                              |
| 4-5 April  | Japanese landing party in Vladivostok                                 |
| 25 May     | Trotsky order to disarm all Czechs                                    |
| 25 May     | Beginning of the Czech uprising                                       |
| 7 June     | Establishment of White government at Omsk                             |
| 29 June    | Czech seizure of Vladivostok  |
| 16 July    | State Dept agrees to Japanese command in Siberia                      |
| 17 July    | The Aide Memoire  |

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<sup>2</sup> Scott G. Gorman, "Adapting to Chaos: American Soldiers in Siberia, 1918-1920," Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1998, 55-58.

18 July	General Graves assumes command of 8th Division
3 August	Japanese and British forces land at Vladivostok
3 August	Graves receives Aide Memoire. U.S. forces receive deployment orders.
August	Graves coordinates logistics before departure
15-21 August	27th Infantry lands at Vladivostok followed by 31st Infantry.
19 August	Col Styer cables Graves with situation report
24 August	27th Infantry commences Japanese offensive north
1 September	General Graves lands at Vladivostok
2 September	Graves meets with Admiral Knight and General Otani
6 September	Japanese cancel offensive operation north
11-17 October	Graves visits the front lines
October	U.S. forces deploy to guard railway and coal mines
18 November	Admiral Kolchak declares himself "Supreme Ruler"

## **1919**

9 January	Inter-Allied Railway agreement
20 January	All Czechs withdrawn from front lines
22 June	Five 31st Infantry soldiers taken hostage
22 June	31st Infantry rescue party ambushed
25 June	3rd Plt, Co A, 31st Infantry attacked at Romanovka
25 June	LTC Eichelberger negotites release of hostages
July	31st Infantry counteroffensive in Suchan
7 August	Final battle of counteroffensive

29 December General Graves notified to begin withdrawal preparations

## **1920**

January	31st and 27th withdrawn to Vladivostok
9 January	Cossacks attack 27th Infantry
7 February	Admiral Kolchak executed by Bolsheviks
25 February	AEF Siberia completes withdrawal
27 February	Japanese announce withdrawal intentions
1 April	Last American forces leave Vladivostok
1 April	Allied intervention ends

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## **VITA**

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